



File Code: 6500; 5100
Route To:

Date: August 25, 2015

Subject: FY 2015 Fire Suppression Transfer

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director, Deputy Chiefs and WO Directors

Fire suppression was funded at \$1.01 billion this fiscal year. The July fire projection model indicated that the agency would incur costs between \$869 million and \$1.53 billion from the fire suppression fund. Currently, there remains approximately \$174 million for fire suppression in fiscal year 2015. We anticipate the current extreme fire activity to continue through the end of the fiscal year and are projecting that the Forest Service will not have sufficient suppression funds.

At this time, the only option for financing the fire suppression shortfall is to use the agency's transfer authority. We must avoid incurring additional financial obligations wherever possible to cover projected suppression costs. Accordingly, I am issuing the following direction to be implemented immediately with the caveats that Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director and Deputy Chiefs may make exceptions for emergency circumstances, and that activities related to 2015 fire suppression activities must proceed:

- Review commitments and de-commit, as needed
- Use prudent cost-savings judgment in managing staffing, including hiring and critical overtime

We have developed a transfer strategy for transferring up to \$450 million involving two increments, the first for \$250 million and the next for \$200 million. The Fire Transfer funding matrix is enclosed. We expect the first transfer to occur in late August with the second increment to follow, as needed. The Washington Office (WO) and each Region/Station/Area will be given a targeted amount for withdrawal based on available balances. These assignments will be at the fund level so you may decide the program mix that best suits your local needs. Field withdrawals will begin the week of August 24, 2015.

Units must manage their program of work so that funds can be withdrawn through both increments. The WO Budget staff will work directly with your budget staffs to collect information on significant impacts these transfers will have on your units.

I recognize that this direction will have significant effects on the public whom we serve and on our many valuable partners, as well as agency operations, target accomplishments and performance. We will strive to reduce impacts, but cannot avoid them altogether.

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The agency is doing excellent work to manage suppression costs by suppressing 98 percent of wildfires during initial attack, implementing risk-based decision making to reduce unnecessary exposure of firefighters and pilots, while protecting life and property from wildfires. However, once again we have to shut down many parts of our mission to fulfill our wildfire suppression responsibilities within the funds available to the agency.

You and your employees, especially our firefighters and everyone supporting suppression operations, have contributed much in the successful delivery of our overall mission. We will continue to do so as the American people expect nothing else.

Thank you for your commitment and service; and thank you for making safety a core value in how we carry out our work every day.

/s/ Thomas L. Tidwell

THOMAS L. TIDWELL
Chief

Enclosure